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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Written statement submitted by the International Union of Young Christian Democrats, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General had received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[30 December 1991]

Notes on the situation of children and young people in Iraq following the Gulf war

1. Since the cease-fire in the territories of Kuwait and Iraq marking the conclusion of the conflict at the end of February 1991, the International Union of Young Christian Democrats (IUYCD) has followed the human rights situation in the area with interest and constant concern.

2. The IUYCD is particularly concerned with the consequences for children and young people, not only of the conflict itself, but also of the social situation brought about by the Government of Iraq, since it seems quite obvious that the situation is closely linked with the wholesale violations of the most elemental rights of the Iraqi population.

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3. We should therefore like to draw attention to recent studies conducted by various international organizations, including UNICEF, showing that, prior to the Gulf crisis in Iraq, mortality among children of less than five years of age was 27.8 per thousand live births, and that this rate has risen alarmingly to 104.4 deaths per thousand live births in recent months. It is also estimated that the mortality rate among infants less than one year old is 350 per cent higher than at the beginning of hostilities in 1991.

4. In addition, studies of the current situation have revealed deep psychological traumas which could last for decades among the bulk of the young population of Iraq arising out of inadequate sanitary conditions and problems of malnutrition which have been dragging on for decades. The future of Iraqi youth is in serious jeopardy.

5. It is a well-known fact that the war has had a disastrous impact on the socio-economic infrastructure of Iraq. Unemployment and the general impoverishment of the population will undoubtedly be most marked among the younger segments of the Iraqi population.

6. The data given above on the situation of Iraqi children and young people are just part of the long list of innumerable violations of human rights committed by the Government of Iraq, a list which, far from diminishing, has grown longer throughout 1991.

7. Amnesty International, among other organizations, has clearly documented all these violations which followed the uprisings that began on 1 March in various cities in Iraq, in both the south and the north (Kurdish areas).

8. The IUYCD wishes to draw attention to these facts, since there is not the slightest indication that the regime has given up its infamous practices.